

APPLICANT(S): SCHMIDT, Christian  
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### AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 22 as follows:

Lately, micromachined planar solid substrates (also called 'carrier') made of sheets of insulating materials such as silicon/siliconnitride (PCT patent application WO1998IB0001150), glass and plastics have replaced the classical tools for directed membrane access such as micropipettes (as in patch clamp) and ~~Teflon~~<sup>TM</sup> TEFLON<sup>®</sup> septa with conventional holes (as for BLM). Advantages include a much simplified handling during analysis, higher stability, better electrical parameters as well as the possibility to mass manufacture the new membrane carriers.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 21 as follows:

In one embodiment said electrically insulating substrate is selected from a group comprising carbon-based polymers, such as polypropylene, fluoropolymers, such as ~~Teflon~~ TEFLON<sup>®</sup>, silicon-based substrates, such as glass, quartz, silicon nitride, silicon oxide, silicon based polymers such as ~~Sylgard~~ SYLGARD<sup>®</sup>, semiconducting materials such as elemental silicon.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 1 as follows:

In one embodiment said substrate is made from a material selected from a group comprising carbon-based polymers, such as polypropylene, fluoropolymers, such as ~~Teflon~~ TEFLON<sup>®</sup>, silicon-based substrates, such as glass, quartz, silicon nitride, silicon based polymers such as ~~Sylgard~~ SYLGARD<sup>®</sup>, semiconducting materials such as elemental silicon, wherein, preferably, said substrate is made from glass, quartz or silicon oxide or silicon nitride, or a mixture of any of the foregoing.